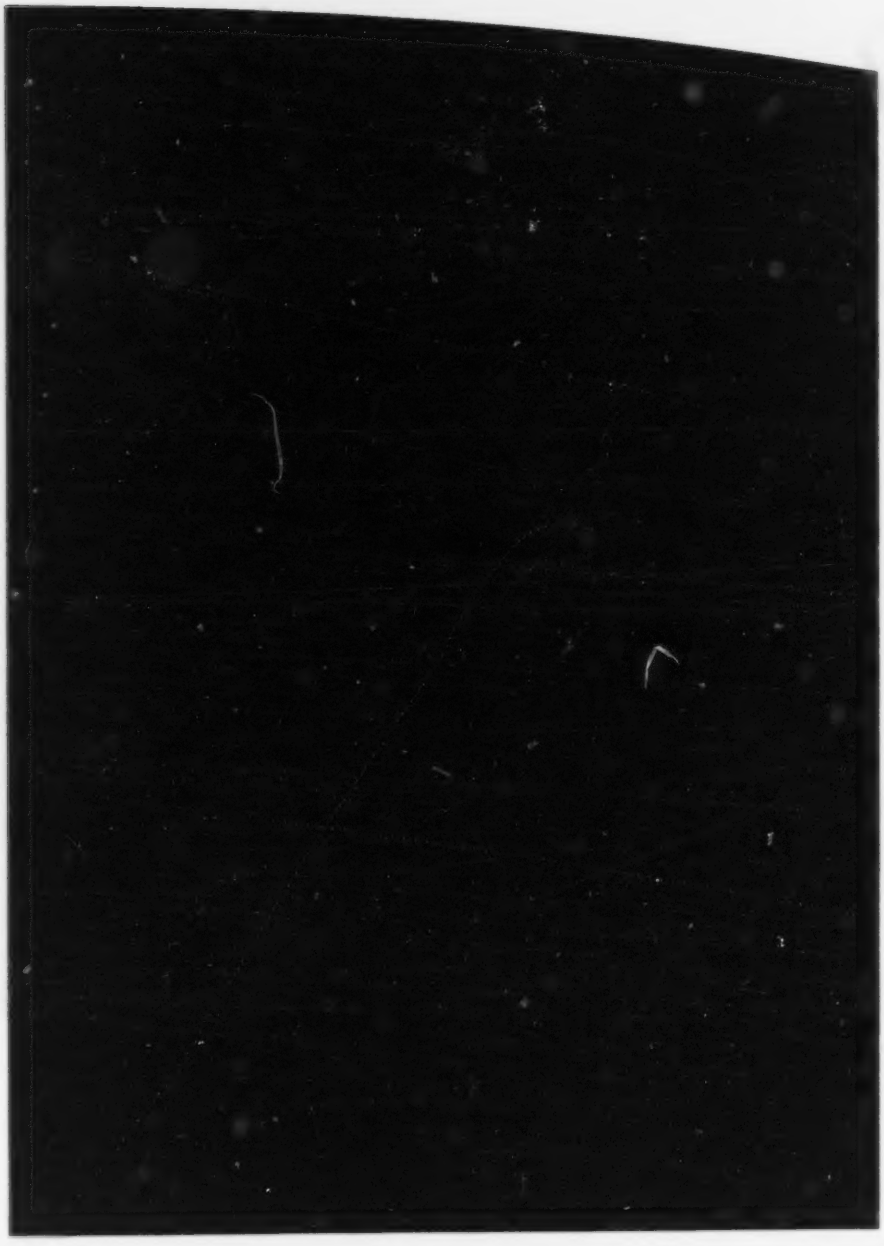
Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy

HIGHLIGHTS 2004/05

September 2005



AADAC
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

INTRODUCTION

The challenge

- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable disability, disease and premature death in Alberta. More than 3,400 Albertans die each year from tobacco-related causes.
- Smoking is estimated to cause 82% of all lung cancer cases, 29% of all ischemic heart disease cases and 81% of all chronic obstructive pulmonary disease cases among Albertans aged 30 and older.
- One-fifth (20%) of Albertans aged 15 and older continue to smoke.

Alberta continues to take action

Since Alberta launched the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy (ATRS) in April 2002, AADAC has led the strategy and ensured the implementation of comprehensive and co-ordinated health initiatives based on six key elements:

- leadership and co-ordination
- taxation as a prevention strategy
- prevention and education
- reduction and cessation
- research and evaluation
- legislation to restrict access and exposure

ATRS goals

The goals of the ATRS are to increase the wellness of Albertans and decrease health-care costs by

- reducing the number of young people starting to smoke
- encouraging and helping current tobacco users to quit
- reducing non-smokers' exposure to second-hand smoke

Performance targets

The ATRS has established the following performance targets:

- reduce the consumption of tobacco products in Alberta by 50% from 2001 to 2011 (Alberta Revenue annual statistics).
- reduce the percentage of Albertans aged 15 and over who smoke from 25% in 2001 to 17.5% in 2011 (Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey).
- reduce the percentage of youth aged 15 to 19 who smoke from 24% in 2001 to 12% in 2011 (Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey).
- reduce the percentage of women who smoke during pregnancy from 32% in 2000/01 to 12% in 2010/11 (Canadian Community Health Survey).

HIGHLIGHTS

ATRS Actions 2004/05

The ATRS is based on a 2001 interdepartmental report, *Reducing Tobacco Use in Alberta: A Comprehensive Strategy*, which outlines its six elements. The following is a progress report for the third year of implementation.

Element 1: Leadership and co-ordination

- Through a specialized Tobacco Reduction and Problem Gambling Unit, AADAC continued to lead and co-ordinate the ATRS in 2004/05.
- In 2004/05, the Government of Alberta provided $12.4 million to the ATRS. Of these funds, AADAC received $9.4 million, Alberta Revenue received $1.5 million and Alberta Gaming received $1.5 million.
- In 2004/05, AADAC provided approximately $2.4 million in community grants to health regions, college and university groups, community groups and non-government organizations for local tobacco reduction projects in Alberta.
- Consultations with regional health authorities, non-government organizations, Aboriginal groups, the federal government and other provinces were ongoing.
- Internal and external advisory committees continued to guide the strategy and ensure a coordinated approach.

Element 2: Taxation as a prevention strategy

- Raising tobacco taxes is an effective way to reduce smoking, especially by youth. In March 2002, Alberta introduced the largest single tobacco tax increase in Canadian history.
- Tobacco sales dropped substantially since the tax increase, but have recently been increasing again. Cigarette sales in Alberta were up 5% between April 2004 and March 2005 when compared with the same twelve months in 2003/04.
- In 2004, discount tobacco products accounted for 34% of the total Canadian tobacco market, up from 14.7% in 2003, and 7.7% in 2002.
- AADAC continued to work with the federal government, provincial governments and other stakeholders to address the sale of discount tobacco products.

Element 3: Prevention and education

- From January to March of 2005, two prevention advertisements ("Older" and "Relaxed") were aired on televisions across Alberta. See the section on the public awareness campaign for evaluation details (page 8).

- The Aboriginal Tobacco Use Strategy (ATUS) funded 19 off-reserve Aboriginal communities and organizations to develop and deliver prevention, education, cessation and protection programs, with an emphasis on the difference between sacred and recreational tobacco use. A guiding circle of elders, youth and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations advised on the strategy.
- A video, *The Sacred Use of Tobacco*, was funded by AADAC and produced by an Elder who is a member of the guiding circle.
- In 2004, AADAC continued funding tobacco reduction projects focused on specific groups, including youth, mental health clients, pregnant women and others. The programs reported positive results for tobacco-related prevention, education, cessation and protection activities.
- The Young Adult Tobacco Reduction Strategy (YTRS) continued to be implemented in 15 colleges, universities and community agencies. These programs, targeting Albertans aged 18 to 24, focus on creating awareness, increasing support for cessation, assisting policy development and denormalizing tobacco.
- AADAC continued to deliver the following education, prevention and cessation programs for youth across the province: Teaming up for Tobacco-Free Kids, Building Leadership for Action in Schools Today (BLAST), and Kick the Nic.
- The Alberta Spit Tobacco Education Program (ASTEP) continued to be implemented across the province. It raises awareness of the dangers of spit tobacco among youth involved in junior hockey, football and rodeo.
- Sport for Life, a tobacco prevention program that co-ordinates elite athlete presentations in schools for youth in grades 4 to 6, continued to branch out across the province.

Element 4: Reduction and cessation

- From January to March of 2005, two advertisements were aired on televisions across Alberta. One ("Patch") focused on cessation and the other ("Escape") focused on second-hand smoke. See the section on the public awareness campaign for evaluation details (page 8).
- The toll-free, provincewide Smokers' Help Line (1-866-332-2322) received an average of 230 calls per month. Online counselling was provided, as were follow-up calls to Albertans in need of support as they attempt to quit smoking.
- AADAC's 30 tobacco reduction counsellors continued working provincewide with community partners. They are helping to build tobacco-reduction capacity in Alberta.
- AADAC funded regional health authorities and several non-government organizations to work with health-care providers (physicians, oral health professionals, nurses, respiratory therapists and home visitors) to assist pregnant women and other Albertans to quit smoking.

Element 5: Research and evaluation

- Evaluation of the 2004/2005 ATRS Public Awareness Campaign was initiated to measure the public's recall of the campaign and the campaign's effectiveness in communicating its messages to adult smokers and youth. (Messages related to tobacco prevention and cessation, and protection from second-hand smoke.)
- The new Tobacco Cessation Program at AADAC's Lander Residential Treatment Centre was evaluated for utilization, quality and client outcomes. The treatment centre is for adults with addictions to alcohol and other drugs.
- A "state of the science" literature review was conducted to assess the evidence in support of using sport activities and elite athletes to prevent tobacco use among youth.
- The Sport for Life program and media campaign were evaluated by CIS Research (now Pivotal Research). The evaluation focused on the quality and effectiveness of this youth tobacco prevention program.
- A clinical outcome evaluation of the Tobacco Cessation Program at the Henwood Residential Treatment Centre was conducted with adults with addictions to alcohol and other drugs, who had completed the program. This treatment group sustained smoking quit rates consistently higher than those typically found among Canadian smokers trying to quit smoking.
- A special research report, *The 2002 Youth Smoking Survey of Alberta Students in Grades 5 to 9*, was prepared based on results of the national 2002 Youth Smoking Survey that were released by Statistics Canada in 2004.
- An educational workshop on evaluating community-based tobacco reduction programs was delivered to recipients of ATRS Community Grants project funding, so as to build local and provincial capacity for evaluation of these projects.
- Population surveillance of tobacco use in Alberta was conducted to monitor trends in smoking rates and exposure to second-hand smoke among Albertans, particularly among children, youth, young adults and pregnant women.

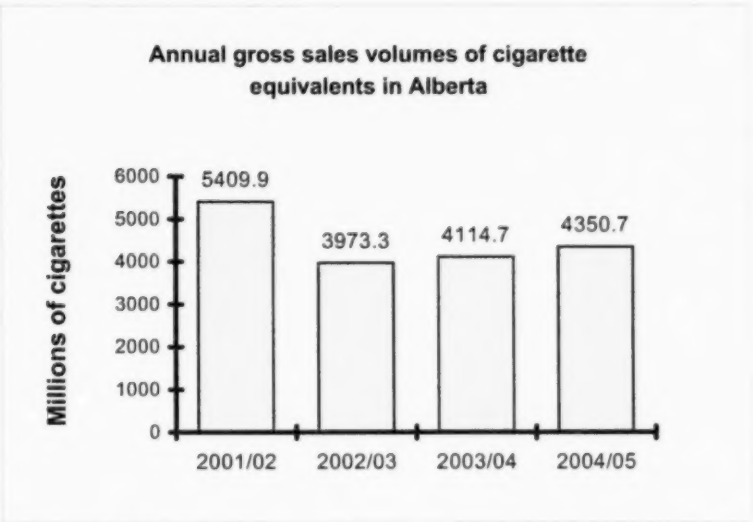
Element 6: Legislation to restrict access and exposure

- Bill 201: Smoke-Free Places Act received royal assent on May 10, 2005. The amended Smoke-Free Places Act protects minors and sets a minimum provincial standard for protection from second-hand smoke in Alberta. The act will come into effect in 2006.
- The Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act took effect April 1, 2003. The act prohibits youth under 18 from possessing or using tobacco products in public places.
- The Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Amendment Act was proclaimed on September 1, 2004. The amended act provides a broader definition of public places where the act can be enforced, improves the ability of police and the courts to enforce the act and allows for exemptions among certain classes of youth.

- The Community Capacity Building and Bylaw Development program provided funding to 26 community-based campaigns to develop local smoke-free policies.
- As of September 2005, 86 out of 362 Alberta municipalities had smoking bylaws. Of those, 13 municipalities had 100% smoke-free bylaws.
- AADAC continued to work with municipalities to develop, implement and maintain smoke-free policies that further protect citizens from second-hand smoke.

ATRS RESULTS

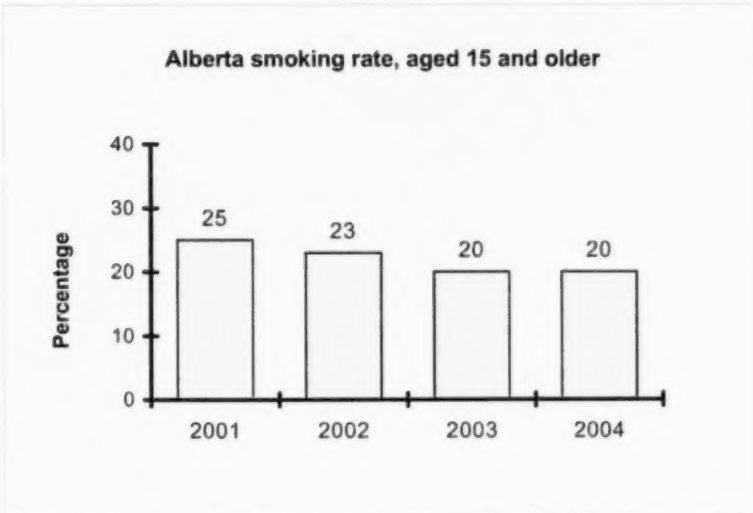
Third-year statistics



Source: Alberta Revenue

According to Alberta Revenue, sales of cigarettes and cigarette equivalents (custom-cut cigarettes and loose-cut tobacco) in Alberta have increased. Cigarette sales in Alberta were up 5% between April 2004 and March 2005 when compared with the same twelve months in 2003/04. In 2004, discount tobacco products accounted for 34% of the total Canadian tobacco market, up from 14.7% in 2003, and 7.7% in 2002.

According to the 2004 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS), about 20% of smokers in Alberta prefer to buy discount-price cigarettes. Older smokers (aged 35+) purchase a higher proportion of discount cigarettes than younger smokers.

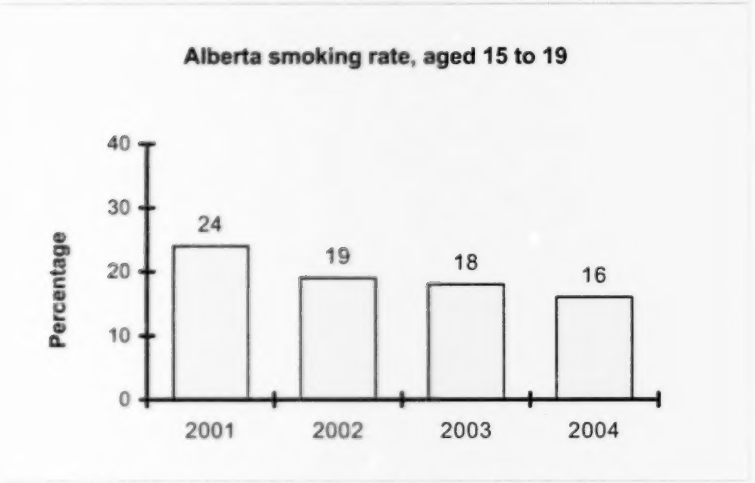


Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004

The 2004 CTUMS also shows that the smoking rate in Alberta remained stable between 2003 and 2004. It is now the same as the national smoking rate of 20% among Canadians 15 and older.

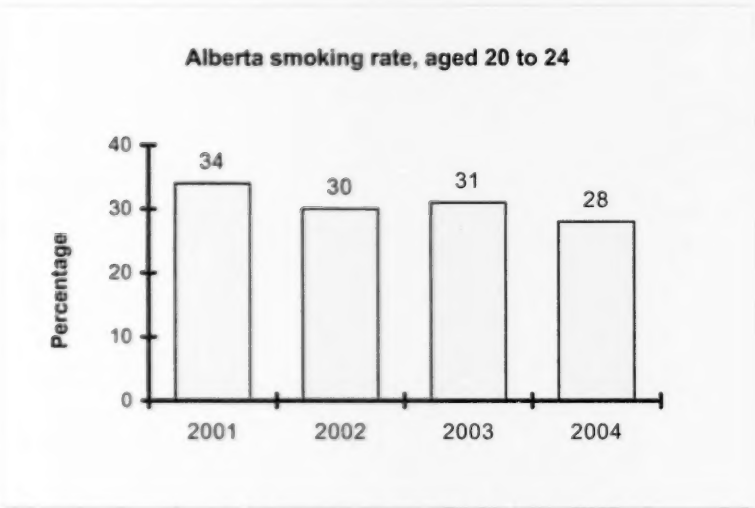
In 2001, 25% of Albertans aged 15 and older smoked. In 2004, 20% reported smoking. This overall 5% decrease represents approximately 100,000 fewer smokers since 2001.

Smoking rates have also decreased for the ATRS target groups of youth and young adults.



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004

In 2001, 24% of youth aged 15 to 19 smoked. In 2004, the rate dropped to 16%, an 8% overall reduction in youth smokers since 2001.



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004

In 2001, 34% of young adults aged 20 to 24 smoked. In 2004, the rate dropped to 28%, a 6% overall reduction in young adult smokers since 2001.

Estimated long-term cost avoidance of $465 million

Tobacco reduction initiatives are a good investment:

- A reduction in the Alberta smoking rate from 25% in 2001 to 20% in 2003 and 2004 represents an estimated long-term annual cost avoidance to the Alberta economy of approximately $465 million in 2003 dollars. This is a 40:1 return on the Government of Alberta's investment of $11.7 million in the ATRS in 2001/02, $12 million in 2003/04, and $12.4 million in 2004/05.
- A five-percentage-point reduction in the Alberta smoking rate is equivalent to approximately 100,000 fewer smokers.

ATRS public awareness campaign

In 2004/05, the ATRS public awareness campaign continued to focus on information, prevention and cessation, while also introducing a second-hand smoke message. The campaign featured four 30-second paid television advertisements, as well as advertisements on cable TV listings. Two hard-hitting and graphic ads, "Older" and "Relaxed," delivered a prevention message to youth. "Escape" used a dramatic and unique approach to present a message to parents about the dangers of smoking in the home and of second-hand smoke. A cessation ad, "Patch," provided a lighthearted take on quitting smoking and directed smokers to the Smokers' Help Line.

An independent contractor, Ipsos-ASI, evaluated the campaign, and research results indicate that the campaign is effective in

- encouraging youth not to start smoking
- strengthening youth awareness of the harmful effects of smoking
- encouraging adult and youth smokers to quit

The rates of recall for the campaign show that ATRS ads reached the intended audience and were memorable. They were able to cut through the clutter of TV advertising and communicate messages about tobacco protection, prevention and cessation.

When prompted, 75% of adults and 90% of youth in Alberta remembered at least one of the television ads. These results were significantly higher than the 50% recall rate normally seen by Ipsos-ASI for campaigns with similar levels of media weight.

Prompted recall of three of the four TV ads was well above the norm for campaigns of higher media weight (ads that appear more frequently), according to Ipsos-ASI evaluations of other advertising campaigns.

Not only were the advertisements remembered; they were also believed to be effective. The majority of adults and youth thought the ATRS television advertisements were effective in

- catching their attention
- encouraging adults and youth who smoke to quit
- giving good reasons not to smoke
- making them think more about the risks of smoking
- coming across as a believable source of information
- providing information about how to get help to quit smoking

Public support remains strong

In an April 2005 Ipsos-ASI survey of 800 adult Albertans, 400 of whom were current smokers,

- about 90% agreed that people should not smoke in public places where children are present
- about 80% supported tougher penalties for people who sell or give cigarettes to youth under age 18
- about 80% agreed that smoking should be banned in all workplaces
- about 65% supported the banning of public displays of cigarettes in retail stores

ATRS future actions 2005/06

AADAC will launch a web-based cessation support network for Albertans. Slated for launch in fall 2005, this is a partnership with the Alberta Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society.

As part of a visioning initiative, AADAC will consult with tobacco stakeholders, including regional health authorities and non-government organizations. The objectives of the consultations are to review the ATRS and accomplishments from 2003 to 2005 and seek opportunities for increased partnership and collaboration.

As part of a tobacco reduction initiative involving sports and recreation, AADAC will conduct a sport visioning process to help determine an approach to link the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy to sports in Alberta.

An evaluation of the Smokers' Help Line will be carried out to determine ways to enhance the reach, utilization, quality, and effectiveness of this information and cessation service.

SUMMARY

Best practices research shows that sustained support of tobacco reduction programs and services is critical to further reduce tobacco use. Consistent with national trends and the goals of the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy, tobacco use in Alberta is declining.

- The overall smoking rate in Alberta declined from 23% in 2002 to 20% in 2003. It remained stable at 20% in 2004, two years after implementation of the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.
- There are approximately 100,000 fewer smokers in Alberta than there were in 2001.
- The smoking rate in Alberta is the same as the smoking rate for Canada (20%).
- Only British Columbia and Ontario have smoking rates lower than Alberta's, at 16% and 19%, respectively. Alberta is now tied with Nova Scotia for the third lowest provincial smoking rate in the country.

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For more information, contact your local AADAC office,
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